

## CPN voters return legislative pair to office



*CPN Chief District Judge Phil Lujan, far right, administer the oath of office for re-elected Citizen Potawatomi Nation legislators Paul Wesselhoft, far left, and Paul Schmidlkofer. CPN Vice Chairman Linda Capps holds the Bible for the ceremony.*

Meeting in Shawnee for their annual Family Reunion Festival, Citizen Potawatomi Nation members have re-elected two members of their new 16-member legislature. Rep. Paul Wesselhoft, who is also an Oklahoma House of Representatives member and lives in Moore, defeated Norman Brasfield of Bartlesville 331 to 123 for the CPN District #9 seat.

Rep. Paul Schmidlkofer, a Computer-Assisted Drawing instructors at Gordon Cooper Technology Center and resident of Tecumseh, defeated hospice executive Chad Higbee of Oklahoma City by a vote of 237 to 214.

The terms of office for both Wesselhoft and Schmidlkofer are four years. Rep. Wesselhoft was elected to the CPN legislature for the first time in February 2008. His initial term was just a few months as part of the effort to stagger terms for the new legislators.

In August 2007, CPN voters approved a switch from a five-member Business Committee to the 16-member legislature. Five of the legislators represent the tribe's Oklahoma membership, and each is voted on by all Oklahoma members. Each of eight CPN legislators represents a district in a geographically contiguous part of the United States. Each of those legislators is voted on only by CPN members in his or her district.

**The remaining three legislators are the Nation's executive officers – Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary-Treasurer. All tribal members, from both inside Oklahoma and across the U.S., vote in elections for those offices.**

**CPN officials believe theirs is the first Indian nation in the U.S. to extend legislative representation districts to cover the entire United States. The CPN legislature meets via video teleconference. The eight legislators from Oklahoma are in the Nation's legislative chamber in Shawnee. The other eight use a video teleconference monitor to view and hear the legislative activity in Shawnee and each of the other seven non-Oklahoma legislators.**

**The CPN provides a video-audio link on its Web site, [www.Potawatomi.org](http://www.Potawatomi.org), to allow tribal members to watch their government conduct business.**